

Testimony of The Metropolitan District
February 10, 2009
Proposed S.B. Bill No 586
"AN ACT CONCERNING A COLLINSVILLE HYDRO-ELECTRIC FACILITY"

Good afternoon. My name is James Randazzo and I am the Manager of Water Supply for the Metropolitan District. I am here to comment on Proposed Bill No 586.

The Metropolitan District (the District) is a non-profit municipal corporation chartered by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1929. The Metropolitan District is a regional agency that supplies drinking water and sewerage services to a population of approximately 400,000 people in the Greater Hartford Area.

The District provides water service to 12 towns including Hartford, Bloomfield, West Hartford, East Hartford, Newington, Wethersfield, Windsor, Rocky Hill, and portions of Glastonbury, Farmington, South Windsor and East Granby.

The District also operates three dams and two hydroelectric power facilities on the Farmington River.

Flow management of the Farmington River is subject to established rules and policies and involves many stakeholders. The Metropolitan District plays a major role in that flow management, along with State and Federal agencies:

- Flows in the Farmington River are in large part regulated by management of releases from the District's Goodwin Dam, located in Hartland, CT and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Colebrook River Dam located in Colebrook, CT. These dams are both located on the West Branch of the Farmington River, approximately 17 miles upstream from the Collinsville Dam.
- The District operates the Goodwin Dam and is required to make regulated releases to the West Branch of the Farmington River in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, a riparian agreement with the Farmington River Power Company, and an agreement with the Allied Connecticut Towns of Barkhamsted, Colebrook, Hartland and New Hartford.
- Releases from the Colebrook River Dam, immediately upstream of Goodwin Dam are managed by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection under the Flood Control Act and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. These agencies make flood control and fisheries releases under existing flow management plans in coordination with the Metropolitan District and its responsibilities. These existing management plans have resulted in a highly successful fisheries program and a healthy Farmington River with considerable recreational activity.
- There is an existing riparian agreement that requires the District to make flow releases of 21.7 billion gallons per year to the Farmington River Power Company which operates an existing hydroelectric facility on the Farmington River at Rainbow Dam in Windsor. The Rainbow facility is located 28 miles downstream of the Collinsville Dam.

- Flow management at Goodwin Dam requires the release of certain natural inflows within established guidelines. Special Act 444 of the 1949 General Assembly as amended, requires a minimum release of 50 cubic feet per second, (cfs) at all times. During dry or low flow periods, river inflow available for downstream releases may be limited. The District may have to hold water in storage, while limiting releases, to ensure that the 50 cfs minimum can be met through drought periods when river inflows may be less than 50 cfs for an extended period. Minimal flows would be available for hydroelectric operations at Collinsville under these circumstances.
- This flow regime was made part of the study by the Department of the Interior under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers program. Management of this flow regime remains a condition of the Wild & Scenic designation.
- The District has operated two hydroelectric facilities on the West Branch of the Farmington River for more than two decades. Successful operation of these facilities is dependent on the District's ability to manage and balance inflows and downstream flow releases within established operating rules as overseen by State and Federal agencies.
- The District's public drinking water supply consists largely of impoundments on the Farmington River and its tributaries. This includes the Barkhamsted Reservoir, which is the largest public water supply reservoir in Connecticut. The District's impoundments on the West Branch of the Farmington River are not currently used for public water supply, but are identified as potential future supplies in the District's State approved Water Supply Plan.
- The District has operated a successful recreation program on Lake McDonough, an impoundment on the East Branch of the Farmington River for more than sixty years. The District operates three beaches on Lake McDonough and also allows recreational boating and fishing. The Towns of Barkhamsted and New Hartford also jointly operate a town beach on the Lake.

The District requests that these issues be considered as part of any study proposed under this Bill. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.